Changing the face of tissue collection in NSW

The TCRN is leading a novel initiative to systemise tissue collection by the South Eastern Area Laboratory Services (SEALS) Anatomical Pathology department at the Prince of Wales Hospital (POWH) and the Royal Hospital for Women (RHW) into the Lowy Biorepository.

The Health Science Alliance (HSA) banking protocol will enable a streamlined collection process for biospecimens and associated clinical and demographic data for storage for the purposes of future translational cancer research.

The HREC-approved HSA banking protocol for universal consent steps forward from the standard collection of single-tumour biospecimens for one investigator-driven research project, to systemising the collection of biospecimens and associated clinical and demographic data of all eligible cancer patients specifically for storage and research. Individual patient consent is sought for the collection of tissue and blood as well as access to clinical data held by the NSW Central Cancer Registry and other health databases. Consenting patients also agree to the use of their specimens and data in future research.

The HSA banking protocol is a universal process to build quality resources for all researchers. Its features include:

- Seeks to establish biobanking as a routine part of healthcare for all cancer patients
- Embeds biobanking within normal health practices making it efficient and affordable
- Not investigator driven, not project specific, not tissue specific
- Consent provided for banking and for future research
- Consent to future access to data from e-health sources
- Integration of SEALS Anatomical Pathology and Lowy Biorepository activities
- Unique collaboration of cancer surgeons, pathology and research support services

The TCRN supports the employment of an anatomical pathology technician within SEALS – effectively our tumour ‘gate-keeper’ who is responsible for the initial identification of bank-able tumours, and the subsequent linking of patient consent, caTissue data transfer, and the final handling and transfer of specimens for banking within the Lowy Biorepository.

The HSA protocol is a major enabling component of the TCRN’s research support services, and is currently actively accruing specimens from POWH and RHW. It has improved efficiency in specimen collection, along with patient clinical and demographic data. It simplifies the process of biobanking for patients, hospital staff and researchers, and provides a new way forward in creating the tissues resources needed for translational cancer research; or as we like to call it – “no-fuss biobanking”.

 highlights in this issue

- No-fuss biobanking P.1
- Announcing the TCRN Cancer Challenge of the Year 2012 P.2
- Reporting for CINSW P.2
- Speed research dating wrap up P.3
- Cancer Grand Rounds 2012 P.3
- TCRN Biostatistics Lecture Series P.4
- TCRN Travel & Professional Development Grants P.4
The TCRN Cancer Challenge of the Year 2012

We are pleased to announce the winner of the TCRN Cancer Challenge of the Year (CCY) 2012:

*Spaced Education: a tool to translate pain assessment and management evidence into practice.*

Congratulations to the research team led by TCRN member Professor Jane Phillips, who will collaborate with a TCRN Translational Team to deliver online case-based learning modules for cancer and palliative care nurses, and residents and registrars, across hospitals from the following TCRN Founding Institutions:

- Prince of Wales Hospital
- The Royal Hospital for Women
- St George/Sutherland Hospitals, and
- Border Medical Oncology in Albury-Wodonga.

The 2012 CCY addresses the important clinical issue of sub-optimal pain management by instituting the routine use of a validated online learning application to improve cancer pain assessment and reassessment practices across the TCRN – the ultimate aim being to improve cancer patients’ reported pain outcomes.

The project builds upon the pilot palliative care Pain Assessment Spaced Education work undertaken at Sacred Heart during late 2011 by extending the spaced education tool into cancer care and across four additional hospitals within the TCRN.

### CCY 2012 planning workshop

*The TCRN invites members and interested hospital staff from the four hospital sites to a CCY Planning Workshop to discuss the potential application of the Cancer Challenge of the Year 2012 pain assessment tool in your clinical setting. Broad representation from all health professionals involved in cancer care is welcome.*

The 2012 CCY also provides a valuable opportunity for spin-off research aimed at evaluating the implementation and impact of the project. Interested health services researchers are encouraged to attend the CCY Planning Workshop to identify directions for evaluative research to build upon this unique project.

The first hour of the workshop will provide a forum to learn more about the 2012 CCY and indicate your interest in collaborating in its implementation in your clinical setting. The final two hours of the workshop will offer interested collaborators an opportunity to refine the research plan to address the practicalities of its application within your workplace.

**DATE:** Wednesday 16th May 2012  
**TIME:** 2:00–5:00pm  
**LOCATION:** St George Hospital, Kogarah  
**RSVP is essential** by 4pm Friday 11th May 2012

To RSVP or for further information, email tcrn@unsw.edu.au with the subject line ‘CCY Workshop’

**TCRN LOGO AND POWERPOINT TEMPLATE AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS**

TCRN members wishing to demonstrate your affiliation with the Network can now request a TCRN logo or PowerPoint template. Logo formats are available for use in email signature, print and electronic materials, and poster and PowerPoint presentations.

PowerPoint templates combining your institutional template with the TCRN logo and/or acknowledgement slide can also be created on request.

A UNSW template for TCRN members is currently available. Request a version of the TCRN logo or PowerPoint template appropriate for your requirements by emailing the Operations and Projects Team at tcrn@unsw.edu.au with the subject line ‘Logo request’.

*The first three members requesting a TCRN logo or presentation template during May 2012 will receive a surprise gift. Be quick!*
NEWS & EVENTS

Speed Research Dating

The clinic and laboratory got a little bit closer on Friday 20th April, when oncology clinicians and dry- and wet-lab translational cancer researchers joined together for an evening of Speed Research Dating.

Ten advanced trainees and clinicians from the departments of medical oncology, palliative care, radiation oncology, nuclear medicine, clinical trials, clinical cancer genetics and haematology at St George and Prince of Wales hospitals came prepared to build new research relationships with experienced researchers from the TCRN membership.

During 6-minute one-to-one ‘speed dating’ sessions, our ten participating researchers presented each clinician with opportunities to collaborate in small, clinically-oriented components of their current research programs. Researchers represented a range of interests including cancer genetics, molecular mechanisms of gene regulation, pancreatic cancer, sarcomas and cancer epidemiology.

Participants used their dating time to discuss clinical and research experience, and to discover mutual translational cancer research interests for potential future collaboration.

As a result of the enthusiasm of all attendees, the evening achieved its aim of ‘bridging the gap’ between research and patient care by facilitating a number of new friendships among translational oncology researchers and clinicians. We’re optimistic that the new networks formed on the night will lead to some healthy and productive longer-term translational cancer research collaborations.

BioGrid Australia seminar wrap up

Over 30 TCRN members and interested clinicians and researchers attended the BioGrid Australia seminar held at the John Dwyer Lecture Theatre, Prince of Wales Hospital, on Monday 23rd April.

A/Professor Peter Gibbs, a colorectal oncologist from the Ludwig Institute for Cancer Research Colorectal Cancer Biomarkers laboratory in Parkville, Victoria, and Julie Johns, BioGrid Data Utilisation Manager, provided an overview of BioGrid Australia, explained how the BioGrid platform can be effectively engaged to analyse and present data, and presented successful case studies in which BioGrid has facilitated research to improve clinical outcomes.

The BioGrid Australia seminar is part of the TCRN’s efforts to provide research support services and information of value to researchers, clinicians and other cancer care providers.

The TCRN, through UNSW, is a member of BioGrid Australia. TCRN members can utilise BioGrid Australia services as part of their TCRN membership benefits. Contact the TCRN Operations and Projects Team for further information.

INTRODUCING CANCER GRAND ROUNDS 2012

TCRN members are invited to attend the new monthly Cancer Grand Rounds to be held by the Prince of Wales Hospital Randwick campus on the last Thursday of each month at 8am.

TCRN Director Professor Robyn Ward will commence the Grand Round series on Thursday May 31st 2012, with her presentation:

‘The Future of the Cancer Centre at Randwick: Crystal Balls and Glass Jaws’

WHEN: Thursday 31st May, 8:00–9:00am; breakfast provided from 7:30am

WHERE: John Dwyer Lecture Theatre, Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick.

Click here for directions

RSVP: Monday 28th May, by emailing tcrn@unsw.edu.au with the subject line ‘Grand Rounds’

This first session of Cancer Grand Rounds 2012 is a TCRN-sponsored event. Members are strongly encouraged to attend and to add this regular event to their diary.

Look out for details of the monthly Cancer Grand Rounds series in each edition of Nexus.
New funding opportunity

TCRN Travel and Professional Development Grants 2012

Applications for Round 1 of the TCRN 2012 Travel and Professional Development Grants (for travel between 1 January – 31 December 2012) are now being accepted.

Travel and Professional Development Grants are available to TCRN members to expand and enhance their knowledge and skills in the area of translational cancer-related research, at both national and international levels. The TCRN Travel and Professional Development Grants are designed to encourage TCRN members to acquire new knowledge, and to share this knowledge with the broader TCRN community.

Available grants:

A. International conference (overseas) travel grant (up to $5,000)
B. National conference travel grant (up to $2,000)
C. Professional development travel grant (short course or workshop registration only – up to $2,000)
D. Bridging the Gap travel grant (up to $5,000)

Available awards

First-year students: 3-year top-up ($5,000 per year stipend + $5,000 research support for up to three years)
Second-year students: 2-year top-up ($5,000 per year stipend + $3,000 research support for up to two years)
Final-year students: 1-year top-up ($5,000 stipend)

Awards are competitive and merit-based, and the research project must be aligned to TCRN core strengths, including demonstrating translational application. Supervisors of award applicants must be full members of the TCRN.

Please ensure that you read the guidelines and eligibility criteria carefully, and that you understand the conditions of these grants, before completing the application.

Applications close 4pm Friday 25 May 2012.

PhD Scholarship Top-up Awards – Round 2, 2012

Applications for Round 2 of the TCRN PhD Scholarship Top-up awards scheme will open on Monday 14 May 2012.

Awards are available to students who have received funding via a peer-reviewed, competitive scholarship through UNSW and who are enrolled within any school in the UNSW Faculty of Medicine.

The TCRN PhD Scholarship Top-ups are designed to enhance the translational cancer research capabilities of early-career researchers who possess research interests aligned to the core strengths of the TCRN. This will be achieved by promoting access to a strong foundation of research support services, including opportunities for professional development and the mentoring and expertise of experienced translational cancer researchers.

Download the TCRN Travel and Professional Development Grants 2012 Guidelines and Applicant Form from the TCRN website.

The TCRN Operations and Projects Team is based at the Lowy Cancer Research Centre, UNSW, Sydney.

Email: tcrn@unsw.edu.au
Phone: +61 2 9385 1395
www.tcrn.unsw.edu.au

TCRN BIOSTATISTICS LECTURE SERIES 2012

The TCRN Biostatistics Lecture Series 2012 will commence on Wednesday 9th May 2012.

The ten-lecture series is open to all TCRN members with an interest in learning about biostatistics. These lectures are centred on the use of the R statistical package and its graphical user interface companion R Studio.

LECTURE 1: Basic Statistics

WHEN: Wednesday 9th May, 4:00–5:30pm
WHERE: John Dwyer Lecture Theatre, Prince of Wales Hospital, Randwick
Click here for directions

PRESENTER: Dr Jake Olivier
View Dr Olivier's bio

View further details of all TCRN Biostatistics Lecture Series 2012 topics, dates and location online here.

SYDNEY CANCER CONFERENCE 2012

The Sydney Cancer Conference 2012 will be held on September 27–28 at the New Law Building, University of Sydney.

Abstract submission closes Tuesday 15th May 2012.

For further information, visit the conference website.